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HONOR OF THE MOUNTAIN PEOPLE.

Article 2d, Reply to Blackburn.

NOTE: This is the second of a series of articles on the mountain region of the South.

The idea of writing these articles was suggested to President Frost by the interview of Senator Blackburn published in Eastern papers, in which he spoke of the mountain people as descended from convicts and having the devil born in them, which could never be eradicated. Such slighting remarks about the mountain region have been too common on the lips of some representatives of the old slave-holding class of the South.

The truth is that the old aristocrats have believed they belonged to a select number of so-called "good families" and that all the rest of the world was inferior. They have not believed in the common people.

It is indeed true that the conditions of life in the mountain region are peculiar, and it is the object of these articles to show why this is so.

The good or 'g'in, the praise-worthy record of the mountain people will be shown, and the way to their development pointed out.

The following communication was recently published in the *Boston Transcript*, relating the conversation of Senator Blackburn touching the mountaineers of Kentucky. President Frost immediately wrote the letter which follows to the *Transcript*. We publish both communications in full, and assure our readers that the mountain people shall not be misrepresented without having something said on their side.

Blackburn's Statement.

Washington, May 8.—Senator Blackburn of Kentucky talked freely yesterday of the situation in Breathitt county, where attorney J. B. Marcum was assassinated several days ago. He said that lawlessness in Kentucky was confined to the mountains of the State, where the most incomprehensible people in the world live.

"They are nearly all illiterate, half-starved and almost naked," said the senator, "yet they are the most hospitable people to be found anywhere. They are dirt-eaters and quarrelsome. Many of their feuds are of a hundred years' standing, and I do not believe it possible to stop their fighting so long as the people continue to live. They have a peculiar code of honor. They never molest a woman, nor will they shoot an enemy accompanied by a woman or a child. For seventy days Marcum was able to protect himself by simply being accompanied by a woman or a child. But they were determined to get him and waited their chance. These mountaineers never shoot you except in the back. They always shoot from the bushes and never give a man a chance for his life. In their way they are honest. A stranger may stop with them in the meanest hovel and never have any fear of being robbed. The mountaineer will lie on the dirt floor and give his bed to the stranger. He will divide his food with him and will be insulted if offered any money for his hospitality, yet for \$25 he would not hesitate to seize his rifle and hide in the bushes and shoot the first man who came along.

"There have been various theories advanced to account for the peculiar nature of these people and one is that many years ago all the escaped convicts from the adjoining states fled into the mountains of Kentucky for refuge, and their descendants are now raising the devil. It is born in them and nothing can eradicate it. I doubt whether the man who killed Marcum will ever be arrested and tried. But he is a marked man, and sooner or later he will be shot in the same way that Marcum was."

Frost's Reply.

May 11, 1903.

MR. EDWARD H. CLEMENT, Boston, Mass.:

My dear Mr. Clement.—Some one sends me a clipping from the *Transcript* of May 8, containing report of Senator Blackburn's talk regarding the Kentucky mountaineers. I sincerely hope the Senator has been misrepresented, but the statements attributed to him are sometimes heard from the lips of Southern men. The fact is, there is a long-standing antipathy between the ex-slaveholders of the South and the mountain people—who owned land, but did not own slaves and who as a class stood for the Union. Some of the old slaveholders have always been unable to appreciate the condition of their humbler and disadvantaged neighbors, white or colored, and have been sincere disbelievers in the doctrine of the "improvability of man."

I hope Senator Blackburn did not say that "the mountaineer does not shoot except in the back," and that

"for \$25 he will hide in the bushes and shoot the first man who comes along." I hope he did not say that the escaped convicts from adjoining States fled into the mountains of Kentucky for refuge. But there are some Southern people who say these things, and I wish to contradict them. The mountain people have their proportion of "toughs" and desperadoes. The mountain people, like people of Senator Blackburn's own class, are much addicted to carrying weapons and avenging personal insults instead of appealing to the law. This is a relic of feudalism which is too common among all classes in the Southern States. The mountaineer, with

less culture and opportunities, shows a larger percentage of criminality, but where he has had advantages he responds with surprising alacrity. Out of these people, whom the Senator is reported as describing as "having the devil born in them, which nothing can eradicate," Berea College is making good American citizens, who will be a credit to their State and a strength to the republic. It is as unfair that the whole mountain population should be judged by desperadoes in Breathitt county as it would be to judge the people of Minnesota by the officials of Minneapolis. With all good wishes,

Faithfully yours,

WM. GOODSELL FROST.

FIFTY YEARS

Father Rogers speaks at the 50th Anniversary of the Berea Church

The visit of Dr. and Mrs. Rogers was the great feature of Commencement this year. In spite of time and hardships, both of them appeared vigorous and full of life. In fact they were among the youngest people to be seen. The greetings of their old students were very delightful, and it is a good thing to have the veterans take a holiday and tell their early experiences. We have still to publish much important matter that was brought out on this great occasion, but we give our readers this week the principal thoughts in Bro. Rogers' address.

THE ADDRESS.

I am glad that the day when we come together to consider the history of this Church is Pentecost, the birthday of the Christian Church of the world. Rejoicing in this glorious gift of the Holy Spirit, we shall be in less danger of any selfish narrowness when we fix attention on things pertaining to ourselves.

Though it is a very small portion of the whole church we have met to consider, we should make a great mistake if we thought it of little value carefully to examine its history and learn its various lessons. It is a part of no human organization, no mere association of persons for mutual help, but a Divinely informed organism, indwelt by the Son of God; though this indwelling has been hindered yet the gates of hell have not prevailed against the church as a whole or this little branch of the church.

Brethren, I do not invite you to join in congratulations over our past wisdom and heroism, but rather to join in confession and humiliation, and also to greater joy than that of personal triumph, in seeing how the Lord hath triumphed.

This organization as a Kentucky church of the 19th century has its peculiar traits and characteristics. Kentucky's climate and soil conspired to make it the home of men and women unsurpassed for physical beauty, frankness, courage, hospitality and good comradeship—qualities which form a natural basis for a church which, if fully instructed in all truth and abiding in Christ, will make one of unusual excellence.

Yet these same people, if they look at the church simply as a means by which man may get to heaven and regard the main thing as joining the church rather than growing when in it—if such notions prevail, church life will be at a low ebb.

In the early history of Kentucky the sentiment of liberty was strong, and this spirit manifested itself and provided for the Berea church in the midst of difficulties and persecutions. In 1807 there was a Baptist Association that refused fellowship with slaveholders. The Presbyterian Synod in 1834 issued a very able manifesto against slavery. The immediate founder of Berea, Brother Fee, a native of Bracken County, was distinguished as an anti-slavery champion when he came to this part of the State at Gen. Clay's invitation fifty years ago.

The beginning of this church is thus described in the Manual of the Church:

"In the month of September 1853, at a meeting conducted by Rev. J. G. Fee and the Rev. W. B. Fisk, in what was known as the Glade Meeting House, Madison County, Thomas J. and Frances Renfro, his wife, William Wright and Martha Wright,

his wife; George West and Helen West, his wife; John Burnham, Sr., Wm. Stapp, Jemima Tatum, and Amanda Walters, on profession of their faith in Christ, all having been baptized, were organized into a church. Though most of these not long after became my personal friends, I must not turn aside for their portraiture, yet I may be allowed a word about the first two mentioned: Thomas Renfro was a quiet but a very strong man, free from pretense, calm, judicial, clear-sighted, seeing the main point in any question, able to defend his belief with clear ideas. He was willing to step to the front and be peculiar and meet prejudice, but was not presumptuous or dictatorial in bearing. His wife was worthy of him, self-forgetful, unostentatious, and ready for every good word and work. Most of these members had been influenced by Alexander Campbell, whose preaching had made a great impression in Kentucky.

The Providence of God provided for the new church a foster-mother in the American Missionary Association, an undenominational Christian organization, imbued with a strong anti-slavery sentiment, which gave to Bro. Fee and the early founders of Berea assistance without which their work would have been impossible.

The starting of this little church in the "bresh" reminds me of the first visit of Paul and Silas to Philippi. It was a small beginning, but it had lived and had its part in the overthrow of slavery and establishing a college which commands the admiration of the President of the United States and many of the wisest and best of the land.

I am not here to give praise to men, but rejoice to pay my tribute to the courage, fidelity, and persistence of Bro. Fee, whom the Lord raised up to do a needed and all important work, a man who could not be turned aside from what he thought to be duty any more than the sun from its course.

Mr. Fisk preached to the new church for a year and then Mr. Fee became its pastor and remained so for more than forty years.

The church found the first home of its own in the public schoolhouse on the site of our present district school in a dense thicket penetrated only by a few paths. The building was a simple room 18 by 24 ft., covered with rived boards, unplastered and unpainted. But it was a shelter, and here beside a strong table the gospel trumpet was sounded by Mr. Fee and others. Soon various helpers came; students from Oberlin College, who worked with Mr. Fee during their vacations, in Madison and other counties—George Candee, whose very presence inspired confidence; Otis B. Waters, who had unusual merits as a teacher; Wm. E. Lincoln, whose early life was spent in England; John White, son of a Methodist minister near Cincinnati; Richardson, a man of most gentle spirit—true and faithful men and valuable helpers. It was some years before ministers in "good and regular standing" in Kentucky, of any denomination, would risk their reputation by preaching at Berea, "a place everywhere spoken against." Other liberty-loving churches of a few members were planted round about, but the intense opposition put them under ban and the utmost effort was necessary to keep them from

(Continued on page 6.)



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